

## **BEGINNING THOUGHT**

The words that you think about in your mind, or that you text or email to people, or post on social media, or simply speak verbally in daily conversation — are a SPIRITUAL INDICATOR (or GAUGE) of your present relationship with God ... whether good or bad ... wise or foolish ... heavenly or hellish. —> (How are you doing with that?)

**Don't let your tongue be the devil's plaything.  
Instead, let your tongue be a mighty instrument in the hands of an awesome God!**

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## **THEME VERSE - (Matthew 12:34b)**

**“For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” (ESV, NKJV)**

31 “Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. 32 Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come. 33 “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. 34 You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? **For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.** 35 The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil. 36 But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. 37 For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.” (Matthew 12:31-37 NASB)

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## **OUR BIG PROBLEM - God hates the evil our tongues are capable of ... and often do!**

(Proverbs 6:16-19) — “There are six things which the Lord hates, yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil, a false witness who utters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers.”

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## **OUR EVEN BIGGER PROBLEM - We have a heart-problem, not merely a tongue-problem!**

(Matthew 15:7-20) — 7 You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you: 8 ‘This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me. 9 But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.” 10 After Jesus called the crowd to Him, He said to them, “Hear and understand. 11 It is not what enters into the mouth that defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man.” 12 Then the disciples came and said to Him, “Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement?” 13 But He answered and said, “Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be uprooted. 14 Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit.” 15 Peter said to Him, “Explain the parable to us.” 16 Jesus said, “Are you still lacking in understanding also? 17 Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated? 18 But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. 19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. 20 These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man.”

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(Jeremiah 17:9) — “The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?”  
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**ILLUSTRATION #1:** When I was 10 years old I had my mouth washed out with soap for saying bad words. I spit soap all night from the top bunk of my bunk bed, onto the floor. But the soap didn't work because it was only a temporary bandaid. My tongue wasn't the problem — my heart was! But my parents didn't have any heart-soap. Only God can clean the heart! Only God has heart-soap!

**ILLUSTRATION #2:** You can clean the exhaust pipes on a car, but they'll still get dirty once you run the motor.

**ILLUSTRATION #3:** You have air conditioning vents and filters in your house. They get dirty, but the dirt you see is a RESULT of what is already in the air, all around you.  
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## **TONGUE TAMING - (James 3:5-6; 8-10)**

### **Hell is in your mouth and that ought not be the case!**

(James 3:1-10) — 1 Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment. 2 For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well. 3 Now if we put the bits into the horses' mouths so that they will obey us, we direct their entire body as well. 4 Look at the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by strong winds, are still directed by a very small rudder wherever the inclination of the pilot desires. **5 So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! 6 And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell.** 7 For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race. **8 But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. 9 With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; 10 from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.** (James 3:1-10)  
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### **“THE LIPS OF THE FOOL...” — Truisms from Proverbs**

(Proverbs 6:12) - “A worthless person, a wicked man, is the one who walks with a perverse mouth.”  
(Proverbs 10:19) - “When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable”  
(Proverbs 11:13) - “He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets”  
(Proverbs 12:13) - “An evil man is ensnared by the transgression of his lips”  
(Proverbs 12:18) - “There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword”  
(Proverbs 14:25) - “he who utters lies is treacherous”  
(Proverbs 10:18) - “He who conceals hatred has lying lips, and he who spreads slander is a fool”  
(Proverbs 12:23) - “the heart of fools proclaims folly”  
(Proverbs 13:3) - “The one who opens wide his lips comes to ruin.”  
(Proverbs 14:3) - “In the mouth of the foolish is a rod for his back”  
(Proverbs 14:7) - “Leave the presence of a fool, or you will not discern words of knowledge”  
(Proverbs 14:23) - “mere talk leads only to poverty”

(Proverbs 15:1) - "a harsh word stirs up anger"  
(Proverbs 16:27) - "A worthless man digs up evil, while his words are like scorching fire."  
(Proverbs 16:28) - "A perverse man spreads strife, and a slanderer separates intimate friends"  
(Proverbs 17:7) - "Excellent speech is not fitting for a fool, much less are lying lips to a prince"  
(Proverbs 18:2) - "A fool does not delight in understanding, but only in revealing his own mind."  
(Proverbs 18:6-8) - "A fool's lips bring strife, and his mouth calls for blows. A fool's mouth is his ruin, and his lips are the snare of his soul. The words of a whisperer are like dainty morsels, and they go down into the innermost parts of the body."  
(Proverbs 18:13) - "He who gives an answer before he hears, it is folly and shame to him."  
(Proverbs 24:1-2) - "Do not be envious of evil men, nor desire to be with them; for their minds devise violence, and their lips talk of trouble."  
(Proverbs 26:19) - "Like a thorn which falls into the hand of a drunkard, so is a proverb in the mouth of fools."  
(Proverbs 27:2) - "Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips."  
(Proverbs 29:20) - "Do you see a man who is hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him."

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## **HEART CLEANSING - (Psalm 51:1-17)**

### **God does the miraculous for you because you can't do it for yourself!**

1 **Be gracious** to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the greatness of Your compassion **blot out** my transgressions. 2 **Wash me** thoroughly from my iniquity and **cleanse me** from my sin. 3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. 4 Against You, You only, I have sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You are justified when You speak and blameless when You judge. 5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me. 6 Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being, and in the hidden part You will **make me** know wisdom. 7 **Purify me** with hyssop, and I shall be clean; **wash me**, and I shall be whiter than snow. 8 **Make me** to hear joy and gladness, **let** the bones which You have broken rejoice. 9 **Hide** Your face from my sins and **blot out** all my iniquities. 10 **Create in me** a clean heart, O God, and **renew** a steadfast spirit within me. 11 **Do not cast me away** from Your presence and **do not take Your Holy Spirit from me**. 12 **Restore to me** the joy of Your salvation and **sustain me** with a willing spirit. 13 Then I will **teach** transgressors Your ways, and sinners will be converted to You. 14 **Deliver me** from bloodguiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation; **then my tongue will joyfully sing of Your righteousness.** **15 O Lord, open my lips, that my mouth may declare Your praise.** 16 For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering. 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

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(Psalm 19:14) — "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer."

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## **“THE LIPS OF THE RIGHTEOUS...” – Truisms from Proverbs**

(Proverbs 10:11) - “The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life”

(Proverbs 10:13) - “On the lips of the discerning, wisdom is found”

(Proverbs 10:20) - “The tongue of the righteous is as choice silver”

(Proverbs 10:21) - “The lips of the righteous feed many”

(Proverbs 10:31) - “The mouth of the righteous flows with wisdom”

(Proverbs 10:32) - “The lips of the righteous bring forth what is acceptable”

(Proverbs 12:6) - “the mouth of the upright will deliver them”

(Proverbs 12:14) - “A man will be satisfied with good by the fruit of his words”

(Proverbs 12:17) - “He who speaks truth tells what is right”

(Proverbs 12:18) - “the tongue of the wise brings healing”

Proverbs 12:19) - “Truthful lips will be established forever”

(Proverbs 15:1) - “A gentle answer turns away wrath”

(Proverbs 15:18) - “the slow to anger calms a dispute”

(Proverbs 16:13) - “Righteous lips are the delight of kings, and he who speaks right is loved.”

(Proverbs 16:23) - “sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness”

(Proverbs 31:9) - “Open your mouth, judge righteously, and defend the rights of the afflicted and needy”

(Proverbs 21:23) - “He who guards his mouth and his tongue, guards his soul from troubles”

(Proverbs 24:26) - “He kisses the lips who gives a right answer.”

(Proverbs 25:15) - “By forbearance a ruler may be persuaded, and a soft tongue breaks the bone”

(Proverbs 28:23) - “He who rebukes a man will afterward find more favor than he who flatters with the tongue.”

(Proverbs 31:26) - “She opens her mouth in wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.”

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## **(Ephesians 5:15-21) - Spirit-Filled People Will Manifest Spirit-Filled Speech**

15 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, 16 making the most of your time, because the days are evil. 17 So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; 20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; 21 and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

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## **(1 Peter 2:21-24) - Christ is Our Example of Perfect Speech and Perfect Godliness**

21 For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, 22 who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; 23 and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; 24 and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

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**Mark 5:1-20 - (FROM A DEMON-POSSESSED TONGUE, TO AN EVANGELIST IN DECAPOLIS)**

1 They came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gerasenes. 2 When He got out of the boat, immediately a man from the tombs with an unclean spirit met Him, 3 and he had his dwelling among the tombs. And no one was able to bind him anymore, even with a chain; 4 because he had often been bound with shackles and chains, and the chains had been torn apart by him and the shackles broken in pieces, and no one was strong enough to subdue him. 5 Constantly, night and day, he was screaming among the tombs and in the mountains, and gashing himself with stones. 6 Seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him; 7 and shouting with a loud voice, he said, “What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God, do not torment me!” 8 For He had been saying to him, “Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!” 9 And He was asking him, “What is your name?” And he said to Him, “My name is Legion; for we are many.” 10 And he began to implore Him earnestly not to send them out of the country. 11 Now there was a large herd of swine feeding nearby on the mountain. 12 The demons **implored** Him, saying, “Send us into the swine so that we may enter them.” 13 Jesus gave them permission. And coming out, the unclean spirits entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, about two thousand of them; and they were drowned in the sea. 14 Their herdsmen ran away and reported it in the city and in the country. And the people came to see what it was that had happened. 15 They came to Jesus and observed the man who had been demon-possessed sitting down, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the “legion”; and they became frightened. 16 Those who had seen it described to them how it had happened to the demon-possessed man, and all about the swine. 17 And they began to **implore** Him to leave their region. 18 As He was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed was **implored** Him that he might accompany Him. 19 And He did not let him, but He said to him, “Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you.” 20 And he went away and began to proclaim in Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.

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**Concluding Thought:**

Jesus stepped down from His heavenly throne and put on human flesh—because He loves you! He lived the perfect life that we should have lived—but didn’t. He willingly went to the cross and bore God’s wrath for the sins of the world. When you turn from your sins and trust in Jesus as your Savior, God forgives you and gives you a new heart. Go, and honor Him with the fruit of your lips, your mouth, your tongue, and your heart. And go, tell someone about all of the glorious things that Jesus has done for you!

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**(Romans 10:8-10) “The Word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart.’ — that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.”**

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**Discussion Questions:**

1. What conversations have you had recently that you need to ask forgiveness of from the person you spoke to?
2. Why don’t we use our words more often to encourage people, rather than to criticize, slander, or gossip?
3. Give an example of when someone encouraged you with their words, and explain how it made you feel.
4. How have your conversations and “speech” changed since you trusted in Christ as your Savior?
5. How has social media impacted your use of words and communication, and affected your relationships?